United Nations S/PV.4824

Security Council

Fifty-eighth year

Provisional

4824th meeting

Monday, 15 September 2003, 10.30 a.m.

New York

President:	Sir Emyr Jones Parry	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Tidjani
	Chile	Mr. Maquieira
	China	Mr. Wang Guangya
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Germany	Mr. Pleuger
	Guinea	Mr. Sow
	Mexico	Mr. Aguilar Zinser
	Pakistan	Mr. Khalid
	Russian Federation	Mr. Gatilov
	Spain	Mr. Arias
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Mekdad
	United States of America	Mr. Negroponte

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question.

Letter dated 12 September 2003 from the Permanent Representative of the Sudan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2003/880)

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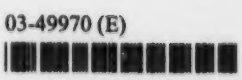

The meeting was called to order at 11.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

Letter dated 12 September 2003 from the Permanent Representative of the Sudan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2003/880)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, Cuba, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Malaysia, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, the Sudan, Tunisia, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Gillerman (Israel) took a seat at the Council table; Mr. Baali (Algeria), Mr. Listre (Argentina), Mr. Dauth (Australia), Mr. Almansoor (Bahrain), Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh), Mr. Sardenberg (Brazil), Mr. Heinbecker (Canada), Mr. Rodriguez Parrilla (Cuba), Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt), Mr. Nambiar (India), Mr. Jenie (Indonesia), Mr. Spatafora (Italy), Mr. Haraguchi (Japan), Mr. Goussous (Jordan), Mr. Rastam (Malaysia), Mr. Bennouna (Morocco), Mr. Shobokshi (Saudi Arabia), Mr. Kumalo (South Africa), Mr. Erwa (Sudan), Mr. Hachami (Tunisia), Mr. Cengizer (Turkey) and Mr. Al-Shamsi (United Arab Emirates) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 12 September 2003 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, which will be issued as document S/2003/886 and which reads as follows:

> "I have the honour to request that, in accordance with its previous practice, the Security Council invite the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations to participate in the meeting of the Security Council to be held on Monday, 15 September, regarding the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem."

I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite the Permanent Observer of Palestine to participate in the meeting in accordance with the rules of procedure and the previous practice in this regard.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Terje Roed-Larsen, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Roed-Larsen to take a seat at the Council table.

I should like to inform the Council also that I have received a letter dated 12 September from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations, which reads as follows:

> "We would like to kindly request the inscription of His Excellency Mr. Yaya Mahmassani, Ambassador and Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations, on the list of speakers for the meeting to be held on Monday, 15 September 2003."

That letter will be published as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/2003/887.

Unless I hear any objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to His Excellency Mr. Yaya Mahmassani.

There being no objection, I invite Mr. Yaya Mahmassani to take the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 15 September 2003 from the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, which reads as follows:

> "In my capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I have the honour to request that I be invited to participate in the debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, under rule 39 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council."

On previous occasions, the Security Council has extended invitations to representatives of other United Nations bodies in connection with the consideration of matters on its agenda. In accordance with past practice in this matter, I propose that the Council extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Mr. Papa Louis Fall, to take a seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Security Council is meeting in response to the request contained in a letter dated 12 September 2003 from the representative of the Sudan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2003/880).

Before we actually go into the order of speakers, could I just state the blinding obvious, which is that we are going to have three substantial contributions to begin with . That will be followed by contributions by members of the Council. Currently we have about 24 other speakers actually inscribed and my expectation is that that list may well increase.

So, in the interest of trying to make this into an orderly meeting of, I hope, appropriate length today, I have asked the three principal speakers who will begin the debate to confine their remarks to 15 minutes in duration. After that, I am in the hands of members of the Council, but my earnest plea would be that brevity all around would, I think, help us substantially. I will, when it comes to extending the debate beyond the members of the Council, look for advice from colleagues as to whether or not a guillotine on the duration of contributions would be in order, if indeed we have so many speakers.

Having said that, we will now move on to hear a briefing by Mr. Terje Roed-Larsen, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General.

Mr. Roed-Larsen: I am disappointed to report that since the last briefing to the Security Council on 19 August, the Israeli-Palestinian peace process has stalled. The recent cycle of terror attacks and extrajudicial killings has broken the Palestinian ceasefire and brought the process to a standstill. A combination of violence and the too slow implementation of the road map peace plan have brought the region to a potential turning point. We are today confronted, once again, with the question of whether the parties will recommit themselves to peace or whether the long, debilitating conflict will grind on. I am concerned that, without a major change in the situation on the ground, further deterioration, resulting in major bloodshed, will be inevitable.

The month since the last briefing has been dispiriting for all of us who hope that the road map will provide a path to peace. On the day of that briefing, 19 August, shock and sadness enveloped the United Nations on hearing of the savage bombing of the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad. The tragic deaths of our colleagues and friends there was compounded by news of a another cruel suicide bombing in Jerusalem in which 23 people — 20 Israelis and 3 foreigners — many of them women and children, were killed. That bombing occurred after two operations of the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) that resulted in the death of 4 Palestinians.

In the aftermath of that terror attack, the Government of Israel declared "an all-out war against Hamas and other terrorist elements" in the occupied Palestinian territory. That war has involved a stepped-up campaign of attempted extrajudicial killings of Hamas leaders. Since 19 August violence has

increased, and the fragile process that began with the presentation of the road map to the parties and the Aqaba summit has been severely set back.

Late last week, after two suicide bombings on 9 September, the Government of Israel announced that its Security Cabinet had decided in principle to remove Palestinian Authority President Arafat "in a manner and at a time of its choosing". Mr. Arafat is democratically elected, and as such, the legitimate leader of the Palestinians. He embodies Palestinian identity and national aspirations. He is far from irrelevant.

Since the last briefing to the Security Council, 81 people have lost their lives to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict — 38 Israelis and 43 Palestinians. This raises the death toll since September 2000 to 2,808 Palestinians and 830 Israelis. This death toll is particularly disappointing and sad in the light of the dramatically reduced toll of the last reporting period when a ceasefire was in effect.

During the current reporting period, Israel has been hit with three suicide bomb attacks. These attacks broke the ceasefire that was declared by Palestinian groups and brokered by the leadership of the Palestinian Authority and Egyptian negotiators. The 19 August and two 9 September attacks killed a total of 38 people. The Secretary-General has consistently condemned such acts of terrorism, emphasizing that they are heinous, immoral, indefensible and contrary to international humanitarian law. The deliberate targeting of civilians cannot be justified to advance any cause.

We call on the Palestinian Authority to bring to justice those who plan and carry out such attacks and to live up to its obligations regarding security under the road map.

Both during and after the unilateral ceasefire Israel continued to carry out extrajudicial killings aimed at the leaders of Palestinian militant groups. The United Nations has repeatedly and strongly called on the Government of Israel to cease such attacks. Our basic principled opposition to extrajudicial killings is compounded by the frequency with which such operations are carried out with disproportionate force in densely populated civilian areas, killing and injuring civilian bystanders in contravention of international humanitarian law. Israel has an obligation as the occupying Power to ensure the safety of Palestinian civilians.

We recognize Israel's legitimate right to defend its people against terrorist attacks, but that right must be carried out using proportionate force and strictly in keeping with Israel's international humanitarian law obligations.

Unfortunately, implementation of the road map never effectively began. I am afraid, viewing the situation with hindsight, that we moved too slowly and with only incremental steps at the initial stages of implementation. What was necessary were bold steps that could have produced support on both sides for the process.

Neither side has seriously and actively addressed the core concerns of the other side. For Israelis, that concern is security and freedom from terrorist attacks. Unfortunately, the Palestinian Authority failed again to grasp control of the security situation. The unilateral ceasefire declared by Palestinian militant groups was a useful step, but other steps such as the consolidation of security forces and security reforms could have been taken. For Palestinians, the core concern is an assurance that the peace process will lead to the end of the occupation and the establishment of a viable, independent Palestinian State on the basis of the 1967 borders. The ongoing settlement activity and continued construction of the separation wall cause Palestinians to wonder whether we are moving in a direction opposite to that goal. In addition, Israel has never fully endorsed the road map.

Thus, the two key issues in the peace process are terrorism and occupation. Virtually all relevant actors have agreed that both need to end in order to achieve a just and lasting settlement. The road map addresses both. But the very limited approach to implementing the road map never effectively tackled either issue. Not only must progress be made on each, but progress must be seen to be occurring by Israelis and Palestinians alike in order to develop and maintain public support for the peace process. Real action must therefore be taken to end terrorism and to end occupation. Without popular support no Palestinian Prime Minister can, at this stage, counter terrorism and terrorist organizations in an effective manner. That essential public support could best be achieved under the current circumstances through the abandonment of settlements. The continued expansion of settlement activities produces the opposite effect. In such an environment, it would not be possible for the Palestinian Authority to move

forward with political and security measures to counter terrorism and terrorist groups.

The principle of parallelism, reciprocal steps taken by both parties in all fields, is a core concept of the road map. The weakness of the past four months of half-hearted implementation by both sides is that parallelism was not emphasized. As a result, a single but essential issue — security of the Israelis from terrorism — became the sole focus of road map implementation. The ineffective way in which the issue was addressed contributed significantly to stalling the peace process. That single focus has allowed violent groups to set the pace and the agenda for the process. We must reassert the principle of parallelism by beginning to end both terrorism and occupation. In that way, control will be taken out of the hands of those who would use violence to prolong the conflict.

Before the establishment of the Quartet and the release of the road map, the prerequisites for restarting a peace process were clear. The first was the creation of an international mechanism, a consensus-based coalition of States and institutions that would put an internationally supported peace plan on the table and guide the parties through a process. The second prerequisite was a plan that would set the end point of the process: the establishment of a viable, independent Palestinian State, comprehensive regional peace and security for Israel. Finally, the situation required the appointment of an empowered and credible Palestinian prime minister, to be a partner for peace and to whom consolidated security services would report.

Despite the recent setbacks, we still have the international mechanism, the Quartet — composed of the European Union, the Russian Federation, the United Nations and the United States — which needs to redouble its efforts. The Quartet's envoys have met frequently to address the current crisis, the latest meeting being in Geneva two days ago. We still have the plan: the road map. However, there is for the moment no Palestinian prime minister for the Quartet and the Israelis to work with.

An honourable and peace-minded prime minister has resigned and the new nominee has not yet, unfortunately, been able to take up the reins of power. The rapid appointment and confirmation of a credible and fully empowered Palestinian prime minister is an essential step to address the current dangerous situation. That prime minister should focus on establishing law and order and ending terror and violence by disarming militant groups. He must express full commitment to a policy of non-violence and to the road map.

The Quartet and key regional partners — Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and others — can do much to help a new prime minister succeed and mobilize the necessary popular support. In doing so, the international community must address the central issues animating this conflict: occupation and terrorism. It is clear that without significant Israeli concessions, related particularly to settlements and the separation wall, neither the peace process nor any peace-minded Palestinian leader will be credible in the eyes of the Palestinian people. Without a credible Palestinian leader, it will be difficult for the Palestinian Authority to take the necessary steps of consolidating security forces, disarming militant groups and establishing law and order.

Determined international engagement is now urgently required. The Quartet is the pre-eminent diplomatic mechanism for Middle East peacemaking, and its continued active involvement is indispensable. The Quartet principals — the United Nations Secretary-General, Russian Foreign Minister Ivanov, United States Secretary of State Powell and, for the European Union, High Representative Solana — have agreed to meet later this month here in New York to address all relevant issues. That meeting will be significant because of the critical situation in the region. The Quartet will review the implementation of the road map and attempt to devise ways of putting the process back on track.

I wish to note that the road map contains provisions for the acceleration or the slowing down of the process. Given the current situation, it might be appropriate to speed up the road map process. Bold steps related to settlements and security and involving increased activity from the international community might be necessary in order to improve the environment and assist in jump-starting a resumption of the process.

In each briefing to the Security Council, the Secretariat has provided an update on the humanitarian situation in the occupied Palestinian territory. We are again compelled to report a continued deterioration in the living conditions of the people of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Due to the continually volatile

security situation, the ongoing Israeli regime of closures and movement restrictions continues to devastate the Palestinian economy and impoverish the Palestinian people.

Currently, donors are providing upwards of $1 billion per annum in the form of budgetary and emergency support to the Palestinians. The objective has been both to prevent the economy from collapsing under the weight of closures and movement restrictions and to keep alive the hope of reconciliation and peace. Should the present situation result in the Palestinian Authority being unable to function politically, a critical question is whether the donors would be willing to continue that level of support.

Much depends on the effectiveness of a new Palestinian Authority Government and especially on Minister of Finance Salam Fayyad, in whom donors have great confidence because of his efforts to promote financial accountability and transparency. If political developments result in the suspension or even the disestablishment of the Palestinian Authority, it might make it impossible to continue that work.

If that happens, the result would be the suspension of budgetary support to the Palestinian Authority. That could mean that up to 120,000 civil servants, each of whom supports an extended family of about eight persons and whose spending power is sustaining the economy, would no longer be paid. In the face of declining donor assistance, Israel would be responsible for meeting the basic needs of the civilian population.

We remain concerned by the continued construction of the West Bank security fence or separation wall. Of course, Israel has every right to set up security structures on its own territory, but it is not by any standard acceptable to put up a separation wall on another people's land. Its construction proceeds apace, and large parts of the occupied Palestinian territory are physically divided from other parts. People are separated from farms, schools and livelihoods and are having their lands confiscated.

Despite the calls from all the members of the Quartet, the Government of Israel persists in building that structure. It makes the establishment of a viable Palestinian State more difficult and the hope of peace more distant, and it undermines any Palestinian prime minister's efforts to muster popular support.

I turn now to the situation along the Blue Line. Since the last briefing to the Security Council, the situation has remained tense. On 3 September, Israeli jets violated Lebanese airspace. Shrapnel from ensuing Hizbullah anti-aircraft fire ignited agricultural land close to populated areas on the Israeli side of the Blue Line. Shortly afterwards, Israeli jets dropped two bombs on a Hizbullah position close to a village. The Force Commander of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) issued a statement expressing his deep concern over the Israeli air raid and saying that UNIFIL would continue to monitor the situation closely. As we have stated in the past, a violation on one side does not justify a violation from the other side.

Those events illustrate clearly the escalatory potential and the dangers involved. We call again upon the Governments of Lebanon and Israel, therefore, to live up to their responsibilities, to exercise restraint and to refrain from all such violations of the Blue Line in order to avoid a deterioration of the situation on the ground.

There is a need for the parties to recommit to the road map process because there is no alternative to its explicit goals: the end of the occupation that started in 1967; the end of terrorism; and the establishment of a State of Palestine living side by side with the State of Israel in peace and security. But the lack of trust between the parties and their inability to take the difficult steps necessary to implement the road map illustrate the need for continued and possibly increased activity on the part of the international community to move the process along. We find ourselves at an extremely difficult juncture in the quest for peace in the Middle East.

In briefing the Security Council, and in our discussions with the parties, we have said that the path to a just and comprehensive peace settlement based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002) would not be easy. We have stressed that peace is a long, hard and demanding process. But we have also said that that should not deter the parties or their partners in the international community. There is no alternative to pursuing this difficult and perilous path.

We are now crossing dire and stormy straits. While the situation is grave, it is alarmist to speak of the demise of the peace process. But if we abandon the

course of peace as drawn in the road map, we would accede to those individuals and groups that do not want peace. We would surrender to those who want to reign through force and terror — to rule not by the rule of law but by that of man. If so, we would abandon the people of the region to further generations of violence, death and misery. At this difficult time, we have no choice but to increase our efforts to implement the road map and to strive for a peaceful settlement of the conflict.

The President: I thank Mr. Roed-Larsen for that very comprehensive briefing.

The next speaker on my list is the Permanent Observer of Palestine.

Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the current month and to welcome you to the United Nations. I should also like to thank the sisterly delegation of Syria for its excellent stewardship of the Council the past month and to congratulate His Excellency Ambassador Fayssal Mekdad on assuming his new duties as Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Last Thursday, the threats of Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people and the Palestinian leadership reached a new level with the decision by the so-called Israeli security cabinet to "remove Yasser Arafat" and to request the Israeli army to draw up a plan for the expulsion of the elected President of the Palestinian Authority. At this critical juncture, it must be firmly and unequivocally stated that the land of Palestine and its people are not the property of the occupying Power and that to carry out such an action or even to constantly reiterate such a threat would be considered an assault on the Palestinian national dignity; it would mean the end of the Palestinian Authority and would signal the actual demise of any peace process between the two sides. In addition, it should be recalled that international law — specifically the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 — is clear in its prohibition of such a war crime.

We believe that the international community must take decisive and swift action in order to prevent the occupying Power from carrying out such an illegal, insane act. For that reason, we specifically called on the Security Council — as did the Arab Group through its Chairman, the Permanent Representative of Sudan — to take the immediate necessary measures in that regard. We appreciate the fact that members of the Council addressed the matter last Friday, and we urge the Council to take action on the draft resolution before it today. The negative Israeli reaction to the press statement read by the President of the Council on behalf of members — as well as to positions taken by the whole international community — reaffirms the need for stronger steps to be taken by the Council in response to this existing danger. Only yesterday, the Vice Prime Minister of Israel, Mr. Ehud Olmert, made an announcement to the effect that killing Yasser Arafat was definitely an available option.

Indeed, Mr. Sharon and his Government represent a threat to the stability of the region. They reject real peace, and they insist on the use of force and on a military solution. Mr. Sharon has publicly said — for those who want to hear — that he does not want a lasting and permanent settlement and rather seeks only long-term transitional arrangements. Clearly, Mr. Sharon's vision is the imposition of a number of walled and separate bantustans, confining the Palestinian people to less than half of the West Bank and to slightly more than half of the Gaza Strip. The Palestinians could find a way to connect those bantustans and to call it a Palestinian State if they wish, while Israel keeps the rest of the Palestinian land and continues its colonization and gradual annexation. To all that, we can add the refusal by Israel to divide Jerusalem between the two sides and the rejection of any rights for Palestine refugees.

Those are the facts, and everything that Mr. Sharon has said or done has been in line with, and at the service of, such a vision. That is why the expansionist wall is being built: to wall in the aforementioned bantustans and to eliminate any potential for a real settlement. That is also why settlement activities — including the illegal transfer of Israeli settlers to our land — are continuing. And that is why Israel proceeds with its military escalation and destruction, and why it has worked so vigorously to reverse the situation to the pre-Oslo conditions 10 years after its beginning.

But achieving such a dreadful and racist vision requires two main things. The first is the breaking down of the Palestinian national movement and the destruction of its leadership, since it would never accept such schemes. That is why we see such a vicious campaign against Yasser Arafat, the national

leader of our people, and the attempts to get rid of him. That is also why Israel did not give anything to the former Prime Minister, Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, since it was understood that he, too, would never accept the schemes of Mr. Sharon and his Government, and that is also why Israel has not welcomed the Prime Minister-designate, Mr. Ahmed Qurei — all proving that what Israel truly wants is the destruction of the Palestinian national leadership.

The second thing is the undermining of international legitimacy, the ignoring of relevant United Nations resolutions and even the termination of the legacy of negotiations between the Israeli and Palestinian sides aimed at achieving a reasonable settlement based on the international conscience — all coupled with intensive efforts to destroy any real international initiatives to salvage the situation. That is why the Mitchell recommendations were destroyed and buried, and that is why the road map was emptied of its contents on the way to its burial.

What really happened to the road map? The Israeli Government tried to stall its presentation, and it succeeded in that attempt for a while. Then, when the road map was presented, the Israeli Government never accepted it. The Israeli Government accepted the "steps" in the road map and attached 14 reservations or "concerns", effectively undermining most of it. In spite of that, the United States of America promised to take these "concerns" into consideration during its implementation. On the other hand, the Palestinian side accepted the road map without reservations.

The time then came for both sides to take the first essential step set out in the road map. The Palestinian leadership was to issue an unequivocal statement "reiterating Israel's right to exist in peace and security and calling for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire to end armed activity and all acts of violence against Israelis anywhere". The Israeli leadership was to issue an unequivocal statement "affirming its commitment to the two-State vision of an independent, viable, sovereign Palestinian State living in peace and security alongside Israel, as expressed by President Bush, and calling for an immediate end to violence against Palestinians everywhere".

During the summit at Aqaba, the Palestinian leadership, represented by then Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas, did implement the first stated step. He even went a step further than the text of the road map required. However, the Israeli leadership, represented by Mr. Sharon, rejected the first stated step. Mr. Sharon mumbled something about a Palestinian State, but he did not declare his acceptance of an independent, viable and sovereign Palestinian State. That was perfectly in line with his vision, but not with the vision outlined in the road map. He further refused to declare an immediate end to violence against Palestinians everywhere.

What, then, is left for the Palestinian side from the road map? A Palestinian State in the form that Mr. Sharon desires, an Israeli rejection of the ceasefire and a return to the Israeli logic that it is the Palestinian side only that has to take the necessary steps. We found ourselves in a situation that had nothing to do with the road map, especially in the light of the attempts to sidetrack the role of the Quartet and to reduce the monitoring mechanism agreed upon in the road map to something that has nothing to do with either the monitoring or the mechanism.

In spite of that, and with a great deal of effort, the Palestinian Government and the Palestinian leadership, with assistance from the Arab Republic of Egypt and other countries, were able to obtain a unilateral declaration by all Palestinian groups to cease all acts of violence. Indeed, there was a very high degree of compliance with such a declaration of ceasefire or truce.

What did the Israeli Government do? It continued with its confiscation of land, its settlement activities and the construction of the expansionist wall. It did not even exert a serious effort to remove the so-called unauthorized outposts. Moreover, Israel also maintained the checkpoints, the siege and all of the policies and measures that are destroying the socio-economic conditions of the Palestinian people. Furthermore, it continued its killings of Palestinians, including extrajudicial execution, as well as its attacks, destruction and arrests. It continued with all of these actions, despite repeated warnings from many parties, until they led to the suicide bombing in West Jerusalem on 19 August. That was followed by the extrajudicial execution by Israel of Mr. Ismail Abu Shanab and the demise of the truce.

Since then, the insane escalation has continued. The occupying forces have committed at least eight extrajudicial executions, which undoubtedly constitute war crimes that should be condemned and stopped. On

the other hand, Hamas carried out two suicide bombings, in West Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, which constitute terrorist attacks that should also be condemned and stopped.

What is shocking about all these events is that, in spite of their detailed knowledge of these events and their presumed role as mediator, some have accepted the logic and positions of Mr. Sharon and his Government almost entirely and have been repeating the Israeli arguments and lies. This is not only painful, but highly irresponsible, and if it continues it will lead to horrendous consequences.

All of this must be brought to an end before it is too late. There must be a complete departure from violence and the logic of a military solution. We must return to the negotiating table, and the road map must be revived and implemented in a real and honest way.

In order for this to happen, however, we cannot continue in the old way. It is time to admit that the essential problem is the position of Israel, which is insisting on a policy of settlement building, refusing to end the occupation of Palestinian land and failing to accept an independent sovereign State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital. Without a change in that position, there will be no peace process and there can be no implementation of the road map or of any other initiative. In turn, such a change, when it takes place, will open the road to the implementation by the Palestinian side of its obligations, including the cessation of all violence and the provision of real security.

It is time to face reality and to stop covering the Israeli positions or running away from confronting those positions while hoping that the process will remain alive, even if in appearance only. It is time to stop inventing other reasons for the current crisis, such as the internal Palestinian situation or other issues, however important they may be.

The revival of the road map will require new and serious implementation, beginning with the very first step, coupled with a decision to face up to the realities and prevent both sides from evading their responsibilities. The Security Council could — indeed, should — play an important role in this respect. It must provide strong support for the road map and officially order the two sides to comply with its provisions and to implement them. We must also, through the Quartet and perhaps also with the help of the Security Council, build the agreed-upon monitoring mechanism and have a real international presence — maybe even international troops — as the Secretary-General has proposed in the past and as France is currently proposing. Such bold steps are required if the current tragic situation is to be brought to an end and a return to the path of peace ensured.

I would like once again to reiterate the Security Council's responsibility with regard to the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the situation in the Middle East in general. It has been almost nine months since the last time the Security Council dealt with the situation — that is to say, since the United States veto last December. During the intervening period, the conditions have dramatically deteriorated and the situation is much more dangerous than before. We believe that, regardless of what happens to the peace process, the Security Council has responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, for defending the Charter and international law and for defending its own relevant resolutions and not allowing their violation.

I want specifically to refer to the Council's resolutions affirming the illegality of the Israeli settlements and demanding that such activities by the occupying Power cease. Now there is also the expansionist wall, which imposes a new and decisive challenge to the Council. That wall is not being built in accordance with the armistice line of 1949, which is also known as the 1967 border. It is being built on Palestinian land and involves the de facto confiscation of thousands of dunums of Palestinian land and the destruction of the lives of thousands of Palestinians.

The continuation of such a wall will effectively end, once and for all, the vision of two States. The building of the wall must therefore be stopped, and the wall must be brought down. We will call on the Council to take the necessary measures in this regard at a later stage. For the time being, however, we must take the necessary measures to prevent the situation from being further inflamed to ensure that no harm will be inflicted on our President. Once more, this needs to be undertaken in compliance with international law, with respect for the national dignity of our people and their democratic choices and, ultimately, to preserve the option of peace.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Israel, on whom I now call.

Mr. Gillerman (Israel): I should like at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on you assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of September. Let me also wish you well in assuming the representation of your great country.

Two days ago, on 13 September, we commemorated the tenth anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Principles on the White House lawn. That was a time of hope for the people of the region and of the world that the leadership on both sides was committed to a peaceful and negotiated resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. At that time, and despite well-founded reservations, Israel was willing to believe that Yasser Arafat had abandoned the path of terrorism and embarked on the road to true reconciliation and mutual recognition. It was on the basis of that commitment that Mr. Arafat entered Palestinian Authority territory to implement his obligations under signed agreements.

Unfortunately, as we have all known for some time, Mr. Arafat lied. Israel, like other members of the international community, has come to that conclusion reluctantly and painfully. More than any other State, we invested a great deal in Mr. Arafat's word and were willing, against our better judgement, to heed calls from other States to forgo or forgive Mr. Arafat's failures, even at the earliest stages of the peace process.

As much as we had all hoped for the opposite result, it is abundantly clear that the person with the standing to deliver a fair and genuine peace on the Palestinian side has done the most to bury its chances. We cannot ignore the facts. His continuing rejection of Israel's right to exist, his denial of the ancient ties of the Jewish people to its homeland and his support of terrorists and their tactics have brought untold suffering to the region and denied the promise of peace and prosperity for Israelis and Palestinians alike. He has sought to turn a political and resolvable conflict into a seemingly intractable religious and cross-cultural struggle. Among the litany of deliberately missed opportunities, the Palestinian leadership, under Mr. Arafat's control, rejected at Camp David the opportunity for the establishment of a Palestinian State side by side with Israel, in favour of the path of terrorism that he, as one of its masterminds, has never really abandoned.

Since September 2000, 869 Israeli citizens have been killed, and nearly 6,000 have been wounded, in homicide bombings and terrorist attacks that deliberately targeted the innocent. There is hardly a single Israeli citizen today who has not been affected, directly or indirectly, by Palestinian terrorism. The equivalent number of casualties in a country with a population of that of the United Kingdom would be 84,609 citizens. That figure may give us all some pause in comprehending the devastating impact that the Palestinian leadership's refusal to confront the terrorists in its midst has had on the people of the region.

Tragically, Mr. Arafat's rule has brought considerable pain and havoc to Palestinian society as well. The brazen refusal of the Palestinian leadership to fulfil its obligations to dismantle terrorist organizations, and join the global campaign against terrorism has exacted a heavy toll on Palestinian society. By allowing terrorists to set-up shop in the heart of Palestinian civilian areas, in grave violation of international humanitarian law, Mr. Arafat has seriously endangered the lives of innocent Palestinian civilians. By stifling dissent, preventing the emergence of democratic institutions and violating the human rights of Palestinians, including the Palestinian Christian community, he has set back the development of a vibrant and responsible Palestinian society. By allowing only one voice while nurturing a myriad of competing security and terrorist organizations, he has succeeded in perpetuating his own corrupt rule at the expense of the welfare of Palestinian civilians.

Events of recent days have proven again that Mr. Arafat is determined to prevent any process of genuine reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians. I dare say, there is hardly a diplomat in this room who would not admit privately that Mr. Arafat represents a significant obstacle to the peace process. He has shunned every outstretched hand, while placating the international community with pathetic rhetoric that has been belied almost daily by his actions. The result has been paid in the blood of Israelis and Palestinians.

He is amongst a select group of terrorist entrepreneurs who have brought airplane hijackings, massacres of Olympic athletes, the killing of children sleeping in the shelter of their own beds, and suicide

terrorism, to a region that yearns for peace and stability. And he is at the helm of those who have been supporting mega-terror attacks, in the style of the bombing of the Twin Towers, to bring the region to the brink of catastrophe. Today such immoral tactics, stamped with Mr. Arafat's label of origin, are callously and indiscriminately exported beyond our region. Global, indiscriminate terrorism is made by Arafat, and was invented by Arafat.

Knowing all this, for how long will there be states among us who are willing to continue the charade of touting Mr. Arafat as a legitimate leader committed to the welfare of his people and peaceful relations with his neighbours. The ruin that Mr. Arafat has left behind in Jordan, Lebanon, and the West Bank testify to the fact that he has brought nothing but despair and devastation to his own peoples and to other peoples in the region. He is his own people's devil of death and their greatest tragedy.

One need not rely on Israeli declarations to come to this conclusion. Courageous members of Palestinian society and responsible Palestinian and world leaders have themselves admitted that Mr. Arafat's cruel, authoritarian and corrupt rule is designed to perpetuate his own power — not to benefit his people.

Since efforts have been underway to restart the peace process through the road map, Mr. Arafat has played a wholly destructive role at every step of the way. He has actively sought to prevent the Palestinian Prime Minister from fulfilling the Palestinian obligations under the road map. He has sabotaged attempts to establish and new and different leadership in the Palestinian Authority, which stood at the basis of President Bush's vision.

He has refused to allow the consolidation of security forces under the control of an empowered minister for internal security, so that finally, responsible Palestinians can act to completely dismantle the terrorist infrastructure, as they are morally and legally obligated to do. After voicing his active objection to the appointment of Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, Mr. Arafat pressured members of the Palestinian legislative council to narrow Mr. Abbas' control. He has acted to undermine Mr. Abbas from the beginning of his tenure to the very end, until Mr. Abbas was compelled to resign and admit publicly that Mr. Arafat had not given him the authority to fulfil the obligations that the Palestinians had taken upon themselves.

He has continued to encourage acts of terrorism and violence, and kept renegade terrorist groups like the Tanzim under his direct control, so that at any given moment he could scuttle efforts to renew dialogue by directing the murder of innocent civilians.

He has worked to prevent efforts made to introduce transparency and accountability in Palestinian Authority's finances, so that money can continue to be funnelled into his private accounts. He has signed peace agreements with one hand, and signed checks to terrorists and suicide bombers with the other.

The decision of the Israeli cabinet last Thursday merely states the obvious, namely, that Mr. Arafat is an obstacle to peace. This realization was a driving force in the call for reform in the context of the road map, and it is even more relevant today as the prospects for restarting the peace process risk being doomed to failure.

In other instances, members of the international community have recognized that certain leaders are so destructive to the rights of their own people and to the security and stability of their region, that their legitimacy must be questioned. Mr. Arafat is no exception.

How many more children have to die? How many more concerted peace efforts need to be scuttled before the world is willing to denounce Mr. Arafat's role in a clear voice?

And yet, when is the Security Council galvanized into action? Was it galvanized to act after the horrific suicide bombings which killed 22 and injured 135 on a crowded bus in downtown Jerusalem, filled with orthodox Jewish families and children and babies returning from prayers at the Western Wall? Was it galvanized to act this past Tuesday when two suicide bombings, at a café in Jerusalem and a bus stop in Central Israel, killed a total of 15 and injured more than 70 Israelis, just hours apart?

The Council may have already heard that these latest attacks were perpetrated by terrorists recently released by Israel as part of a goodwill gesture towards the Palestinian leadership. They are further evidence that every gesture made by Israel and every risk taken for the sake of peace has been answered with criminal

action and inaction on the part of the Palestinian leadership under Mr. Arafat's control.

Let us take a moment to consider the price of Israel's goodwill gestures made at the behest of the international community in the hope that Mr. Arafat's leadership would respond in kind. It is the price paid by Dr. David Applebaum and his daughter Nava, who were among those murdered in the terrorist attack in Jerusalem this past Tuesday. Dr. Applebaum, a renowned specialist in emergency medicine and the head of the emergency room at Shaare Zedek Hospital, who himself had treated countless terror victims, had brought his daughter to the Jerusalem café for a heart-to-heart talk on the very eve of her wedding. It is the price paid in lives because ambulances carrying the injured from a terrorist attack must slow down so that they can be checked as a result of intelligence reports indicating that terrorists are attempting to booby-trap ambulances to explode upon arrival at hospitals. It is the price paid in fear by courageous Israeli civilians who do not know when or where the next attack, resulting from Mr. Arafat's encouragement or acquiescence, will come.

It would be a grave error if the Council were to come to the aid not of the victims of terrorism, but of their sponsor and perpetrator. The Council's focus should be directed first and foremost at terrorism and at its facilitators, and not at the response to terrorism. Pressure should be directed against the problem and not against those who are its victims.

The efforts of the Palestinian representative in this Chamber advance not the interests of the Palestinian people, but the personal interest and corrupt rule of Mr. Arafat himself. High-minded rhetoric about the so-called legitimacy of Mr. Arafat's leadership and the illegitimacy of Israel's interference are meaningless and hypocritical in the face of the hundreds of dead and injured innocent civilians killed with the direct approval or acquiescence of Mr. Arafat himself. What country, faced with terrorism of this unprecedented magnitude and duration, would not hold directly and criminally responsible the person who has both orchestrated the terror and refused to suppress it?

In perpetuating this game of legitimizing Mr. Arafat, we fundamentally undermine our efforts to allow an empowered Palestinian Prime Minister to work to implement the road map and reach a peaceful solution. Such a policy serves the interests of no one other than the terrorists whom Mr. Arafat continues to support. It is time we expressly admitted that he is part of the problem and not part of the solution.

Israel holds out hope that a new and different Palestinian leadership that categorically abandons the ways of Mr. Arafat will be ready to fully and responsibly implement its obligations to fight terrorism and incitement. If it does so, it will find in Israel a willing partner ready to make painful compromises, as it has proven before, to realize President Bush's vision.

Our discussions today take place on the tails of 11 September, the anniversary of the worst terrorist attack in history, and the signing of the Declaration of Principles in Washington on 13 September 1993. These two events are a haunting and vivid illustration of the devastating effects of terrorism and of the promise and possibility of peace if terrorism is abandoned and the vision of peace between Israelis and Palestinians is vigorously pursued.

Time and again, the world has held out hope that Mr. Arafat has rejected the path of terrorism for the path of peace; the hope that he has become a responsible statesman and not remained a professional terrorist. In the two years following 11 September, Mr. Arafat has continued to demonstrate that he is on the wrong side of history and that he refuses to learn any lessons about the effects of terrorism for both Israelis and Palestinians. Rather than taking responsibility to build a genuine, democratic Palestinian society that can live in peace with its neighbours, he has turned Palestinian victimhood into a professional enterprise and Palestinian suffering into a source of power and personal prosperity. We will bring no benefit today to the cause of peace, or to the legitimate rights of Palestinians and Israelis, if we come to the defence of someone who has brought only suffering and the promise of further bloodshed.

Mr. Tidjani (Cameroon) (spoke in French): My delegation followed with great interest Mr. Roed-Larsen's briefing on the latest developments in Palestine. I wish to thank him for his uncompromising analysis of the situation.

The situation in the Middle East, especially in Palestine, is disturbing. The great hopes inspired by the road map seem to be fading. Indeed, since the attack in Jerusalem of 19 August and the many reprisals that followed, violence has gained the upper hand. The unilateral, conditional and temporary truce has been

broken. The closure of territories has resumed, constant incursions have begun anew, raids are intensifying and other coercive measures have been announced.

It goes without saying that the return of violence compromises the implementation of the road map, which is the only option for the parties if they want peace. Today, we should direct our efforts towards the second phase of the road map. Let us recall that the second phase was to provide, on the basis of an assessment of the results of the first, the convening of an international conference and the establishment of a viable independent Palestinian State. Unfortunately, that has not occurred. More disturbing yet, the achievements of the first phase are now being challenged. The resurgence of violence and the myriad threats against the head of the Palestinian Authority, Mr. Arafat, do not augur well for the future.

In this regard, Cameroon joins the international community in stating that these solutions are roads that lead nowhere. They may enduringly undermine the prospects for peace contained in the road map.

We share the hope expressed earlier by Mr. Roed-Larsen about what he called the Quartet mechanism. We also reiterate our support to the members of the Quartet in particular and to all international or regional mediators in their efforts to bring the conflicting parties back to the path of peace.

We welcome the efforts made by the European Union through the contacts of Mr. Javier Solana, High Representative for External Policy. We are convinced that other major international actors beyond the Quartet can use their influence to act upon the parties. Finally, we once again express an appeal to the parties themselves to make greater use of peaceful means. In that regard, it is important that the Security Council send them a strong signal, without delay, urging them to resume immediately a constructive dialogue with a view to a definitive settlement of this long-lasting conflict.

We wish to reiterate our commitment to a comprehensive, just and lasting peaceful settlement of the Middle East conflict, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), and 1397 (2002).

Mr. Wang Guangya (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I wish at the outset to welcome Mr. Roed-Larsen, the Secretary-General's Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, to today's open meeting. I also wish to thank him for his briefing on the latest developments in the Middle East.

Since the last open briefing of the Security Council, the Palestinian-Israeli situation has taken a sharp turn for the worse. Both sides are again bogged down in a vicious cycle of countering violence with violence. That state of affairs has become a source of great concern for the international community. A series of suicide bombings has occurred in Israel. At the same time, the Israeli army continues to carry out targeted killings, resulting in many casualties and deaths of innocent civilians and undermining the Middle East peace process. Equally disturbing is the fact that Israel made a decision in principle on 11 September to expel President Arafat of the Palestinian Authority, thus exacerbating further the already tense situation.

China attaches great importance to maintaining peace and security in the Middle East region. We are deeply worried about the current situation in Israel and Palestine. We condemn the suicide bombings that have resulted in casualties and the death of innocent civilians. We also condemn the targeted operations of the Israeli Government and oppose its decision in principle to expel President Arafat. President Arafat is the duly elected, legitimate leader of the Palestinian people. The Israeli Cabinet's decision is of no help to the Middle East peace process. We ask that the Israeli side exercise caution, in order to prevent further deterioration of the situation.

The history of the question of Palestine and Israel fully demonstrates that force cannot bring real peace and security and that dialogue is the only way to resolve the issue. In the current situation, there is an even greater need for the Palestinian and Israeli leaders to demonstrate political courage and, in the long-term interests of the people of both sides, to return expeditiously to the right track and engage in political negotiations. We strongly urge the Israeli and Palestinian sides to renounce violence and the policy of targeted killings and, at the same time, to take effective measures to implement in earnest the obligations set forth in the roadmap. That is the only way the Middle East peace process will move forward.

Under the current circumstances, it is equally important that the international community make even greater efforts to create conditions conducive to the successful implementation of the road map. We

sincerely hope that, with the support and assistance of the international community, the Middle East region, pursuant to Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002) and the principle of land for peace, will achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace as soon as possible.

Mr. Mekdad (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): We wish to thank you, Mr. President, for holding this meeting and for your positive response to our request to make it open to all Member States. We wish once again to welcome Mr. Terje Roed-Larsen, Personal Representative of the Secretary-General in the Middle East.

Our meeting today is characterized by the fact that it is being held amid an irresponsible and unprecedented escalation of bloody Israeli acts that the occupied Arab territories have been experiencing and continue to experience as a result of the organized and destructive terrorist military campaign undertaken by the Israeli occupation forces against the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem.

It is worth mentioning at the outset of our statement that Israel continues to commit these crimes against humanity without guilt or impediments, within the framework of a strict plan being implemented by the Israeli Government to completely end all efforts by the international community to revert to the path of peace and to implement resolutions of international legitimacy, particularly those regarding the conflict in the Middle East.

We have repeatedly reiterated in this international arena and before the international community the conviction of Syria, which has devotedly and sincerely worked for the implementation of a just and comprehensive peace in the region, that the current Israeli Government does not believe in peace and utilizes every possible opportunity to destroy the sanctity of peace and to undermine its bases. It deliberately disregards all means, references and initiatives that could lead to peace. This Israeli Government is in fact a government of war and destruction that disregards international law and the will of the international community.

With the persistence of Israeli war crimes and the escalation of persecution of the Palestinians, the killing of their children and the destruction of their property, the Israeli authorities continue to declare — and to repeat — their intention to proceed with the extrajudicial killings by which they wage war. The Israeli occupation forces are carrying out destructive, brutal and illegitimate acts that are witnessed by world media. The greatest crime that Israel continues to commit is represented by the expansion of the settlements and the construction of the racist wall of separation that once it is completed, will devour half the Palestinian territories in the West Bank. Israel has not ceased to destroy property, confiscate lands, detain thousands of Palestinian youths, close roads, build bypass roads to service the Israeli settlements, restrict movement and all the other measures that allow extremist Jews to enter al-Haram al-Sharif in East Jerusalem. That will lead only to further escalation of tension and exacerbation of this explosive situation.

It is ironic that Israel uses confronting terrorism as a justification to violate international law at a time when Israel itself exercises terror in all its forms and falsely accuses others of committing it.

The unarmed Palestinian people, for whom Israel has left no hope for the establishment of their own State and respect for their dignity, have every right to defend themselves with the limited means available to them. What Israel calls self-defence in order to justify its acts of terror is in fact defence of occupation, the usurpation of rights, expansion at the expense of Palestinians and other Arabs and full denial of the international will that recognizes the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

In addition to all the violations it has committed, Israel has added another threat: its intention to expel the Palestinian President or even assassinate him. That is true arrogance. It reveals the real Israeli objective: to expel the Palestinian people from their land and homes, in contempt of international law, which prohibits Israel as the occupying Power from carrying out such acts of expulsion. If Israel carries out that threat, it would fully expose its devious intentions to all Palestinians and would end all efforts to achieve a just and comprehensive peace.

We must remember the almost daily violations by Israel along the Blue Line in southern Lebanon, on land, at sea and in the air, in continued defiance of Lebanon's sovereignty over its land, waters and airspace. Israel does not stop at those provocations but continues to threaten Lebanon and deny that country's right to self-defence.

In the face of all those actions by Israel, Syria, whose Golan has been under Israeli occupation since 1967, stands by the Palestinian people to achieve their rights. It stands, as it always has, on the side of achieving a comprehensive and just peace in the Middle East. We have made that a strategic objective, as all the Arab States declared at the 2002 Beirut Summit.

In that regard, President Bashar Al-Assad of the Syrian Arab Republic has stressed the need for a credible unified international vision as the basis for a comprehensive and just peace in the Middle East, to be achieved through dialogue and discussions with the States of the region and through the positive involvement of the United Nations in its role of maintaining international peace and security. President Al-Assad has also reaffirmed that Syria will always stand on the side of a just and comprehensive peace based on international legitimacy, which recognizes the return of all occupied Arab territories to their legitimate owners.

Finally, Syria reaffirms that it is incumbent upon the international community — including the Security Council, which is responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security — to take a firm stand in the face of these illegitimate policies and actions in order to compel Israel, the occupying Power, to refrain from its continued violations of international law and to commit itself to implementing the will of international legitimacy and the provisions of international law and justice. Only then will the deteriorating situation in the Middle East be reversed and will there be a return to the road to a just and comprehensive peace based on Israel's implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), the principle of "land for peace", the Madrid peace conference and the declaration adopted at the Arab summit in Beirut.

Mr. Tafrov (Bulgaria) (spoke in French): I would like to thank Terje Roed-Larsen for his very thorough analysis and very useful suggestions.

As a country associated with the European Union, Bulgaria fully supports the statement that will be made shortly by the representative of Italy on behalf of the European Union.

Bulgaria deeply regrets the resumption of violence in the Middle East. The ceasefire has ended and violence has begun again. We unreservedly condemn the continuing practice of suicide bombings perpetrated by extremist Palestinian organizations. We call on the Palestinian Authority to take firmer and more concrete measures to disarm those terrorist organizations and to dismantle their structures. Equally, we call on Israel to end the practice of extrajudicial executions.

Bulgaria believes that a possible expulsion of Yasser Arafat from Palestinian territories would cause a political crisis of incalculable consequences and an increase in violence. We regret the resignation of Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas. It was a hard blow to the peace process. We welcome the appointment of the President of the Legislative Council, Mr. Ahmed Qurei, to the post of Prime Minister. We wish him good luck. We hope that the new Prime Minister will enjoy the confidence and support of the Palestinian people, the members of the Quartet and the entire international community. To that end, he must possess the sufficient authority for undertaking the necessary measures against terrorist organizations.

Bulgaria is convinced that the road map is not dead. The two parties must do everything possible to overcome their differences, resume their contacts and continue their joint efforts relative to the commitments they made for the road map's implementation. That implementation should over time bring an end to the spiral of violence and terror, including by ending all forms of collective punishment and, of course, by improving the daily living conditions of the Palestinian people. The Quartet and the parties involved in the peace process must redouble their efforts to press the two parties to live up to the promises they have made.

Mr. Khalid (Pakistan): First, I would like to thank Mr. Roed-Larsen for his lucid and comprehensive briefing.

It was not very long ago that the international community assisted the parties to the conflict in Palestine to adopt the Quartet's road map, which contained a clear objective: an end to occupation; a permanent settlement of the conflict on the basis of resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002); and, ultimately, the establishment of an independent and viable Palestinian State living in peace with its neighbours. The achievement of that objective is now threatened by a new, indefensible cycle of violence emerging against the backdrop of the continued

violation of the human rights of the Palestinian people by the occupation forces.

Pakistan is deeply concerned at the situation in Palestine, particularly after the Israeli decision to remove from Palestine Chairman Arafat, the legitimately elected President of the Palestinian party. Concerns on that score have further heightened since the latest statement by a member of the Israeli Cabinet. We believe that any action to remove President Arafat will only complicate the peace efforts in the region, further contribute to mistrust between the parties and seriously undermine the implementation of the road map. It will spur, not stem, the rising tide of violence in which innocent civilians invariably suffer the most.

One must not forget that the current situation in Palestine is a sad corollary of incessant disrespect for international humanitarian and human rights law, which has engendered frustration and anger and has resulted in the unfortunate killing of innocent people on both sides. Pakistan regrets those killings and condoles with the families of the victims.

While the occupation of the Palestinian territories is itself illegal, warranting immediate corrective measures, persistent violations of fundamental human rights of the Palestinian people — including closures, blockades, curfews, targeted assassinations and the construction of illegal settlements and of a separation wall — have added to the misery of that besieged people. Several delegations noted earlier that those activities are intended to create new realities on the ground before the start of negotiations on a final settlement. Security Council officials earlier urged a permanent end to all those measures, yet such violations continue unabated.

Those and other actions have dissipated confidence among Palestinians and have contributed to scepticism about the international community's ability to be resolute in achieving the objectives of the road map. We must neutralize these obstacles by showing a stronger international commitment to a negotiated settlement of the conflict. We must help bring an end to Palestinian dispossession and must facilitate the realization of their right of self-determination.

Israel must realize that peace cannot be durable if it is imposed through the use of force. Nor can lasting peace be achieved by liquidating duly elected leaders and interlocutors. Peace cannot come with one side literally dictating its terms. Removing President Arafat will not bring peace or security for anyone. Israel must cease all hostile actions against the Palestinian people and their lawful Government.

The present deteriorating situation in Palestine warrants urgent attention by the international community. We must act, and act with determination, to prevent the situation from descending further into chaos — a chaos in which neither side can realize its hopes for peace with security. Violence and provocations beget violence and reprisals. We must act now to break the cycle, to stop further provocations and to bring the parties back to the track of negotiations to facilitate the implementation of the road map. We fully agree with Mr. Roed-Larsen that there is no alternative for the parties but to recommit themselves to the road map. We look forward to the Council's action, as well as to the Quartet's next meeting, to salvage the present situation and to move back to the larger and nobler goal of a just and lasting solution in line with the two-State vision.

Mr. Aguilar Zinser (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful for the holding of this open meeting and especially for the very frank analysis given to us by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the region.

It is obviously no coincidence that this new wave of acts of terrorism, provocations and reprisals characterizing this bloody vicious circle is occurring just when the peace initiative proposed by the Quartet and expressed in the road map had taken shape in the political and diplomatic field. There is very clearly a very wide gap between the purposes verbally expressed by the Israeli and Palestinian parties to reach a negotiated agreement, on the one hand, and their weak political will on the other. To the fragile political will of the Government of Israel and of the Palestinian Authority, we must add the openly anti-peace postures that extremist factions on both sides of the conflict are taking daily. What has happened in recent weeks is the true expression of the lack of a genuine and courageous commitment by the parties to a peaceful way out. As the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Roed-Larsen, said, neither of the parties has made a serious and genuine effort to attend to the demands of the other. For that reason, the road map has not taken off, and now we run the risk that this effort will founder. The tunnel through which we had been moving towards the light of peace has once again collapsed.

We deeply regret that the Palestinian Authority has not yet had the strength, the cohesion or ultimately the determination to halt the terrorist attacks and suicide bombings that have caused so much pain, horror and bloodshed to the Israeli population, primarily the innocent civilian population. Indeed, the great majority of victims of those attacks are innocent Israelis — children, young people, women and the elderly — many of them genuinely convinced that Israel and Palestine should and can live in peace and prosper together. Each terrorist attack is an act of self-immolation of the Palestinian cause itself. Each drop of blood shed on Israel's streets deepens the abyss and distances the Palestinians from their just dream and their legitimate vision: the creation of an independent State. The Palestinian Authority and President Arafat must understand once and for all that everything they do to halt and prevent terrorism, everything they do to overcome hatred and to inculcate among children and youths, not a thirst for vengeance but a generous spirit of reconciliation, will benefit their cause. The sooner an end is put to terrorism, the closer the foundations of a Palestinian State will be — not the reverse.

Israel gains nothing by going down the path of disproportionate reprisals, with grave loss of human life. It gains nothing by making life impossible for the Palestinians in their own territory. It gains nothing by creating extreme humanitarian conditions for Palestinian youths and children. It gains nothing by carrying out extrajudicial executions. It gains nothing by building walls. Those measures are very far from achieving their security objectives; they will not make Israel more secure. For the Israelis, there can be no consolation in the fact that, through blood and fire, they are preventing the carrying out of certain suicidal terrorist acts, when other acts will follow them. Experience undoubtedly shows that walls are only open wounds and that fire is not put out with fire.

Mexico, as a friend of Israel and of its people, expresses the hope that extrajudicial executions will be halted, that the Government of Israel will put an end to reprisals against the civilian population, that the building of the wall will be suspended and that the settlements will be halted.

My Government also expresses the particular hope that measures to expel or confine President Yasser Arafat will not be taken. He is the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, having been elected by them, and must be respected as such. Israel will gain nothing by violating the self-determination of the Palestinian people.

Mexico has endorsed all the various attempts to resolve this issue that the Council has supported since the Madrid Conference, the Oslo Agreements and the various commendable mediation efforts led by the United States. The path of mediation has led to the road map proposed by the Quartet. This is not just one more initiative; in many ways it is the final opportunity for Israel and Palestine to truly cross the threshold to a peace in which both sides can live together as independent nations with secure borders. The road map has its failings — it does not establish a clear sequence for mutual concessions and it does not set out a clear system of penalties for the parties. Nor does not it establish a clear system for implementation. Those failings can — and should — be corrected. The Quartet's road map should not, however, be aborted; it remains the only way forward towards a viable and legitimate solution of the conflict.

Together with the efforts of the Quartet, the Council should consider the adoption of other measures to strengthen confidence and improve the prospects for peace so as to put an end to violence and deal with the deeply distressing humanitarian situation faced by the Palestinian people. The Security Council has an obligation to take action. Israelis and Palestinians should be prepared for the Security Council to become a part of the solution to this conflict.

Only through the prompt establishment of a Palestinian State will peace be possible, and this will not be achieved by expelling Yasser Arafat.

Mr. Gatilov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We, like previous speakers, are grateful to the Special Coordinator and Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Terje Roed-Larsen, for his comprehensive and objective briefing. We are once again discussing an exacerbation of the situation in the Middle East. Unfortunately, the Palestinian-Israeli confrontation is taking on an increasingly dangerous character. People are dying and serious material damage is being done to the Palestinian territories — indeed, a humanitarian disaster is unfolding there.

Moscow is deeply concerned about the Government of Israel's decision to expel the head of the Palestinian National Authority, Mr. Arafat. To do so would be a serious political mistake with very negative implications for a region where the situation is already

very complex. Such a step would erase any prospects for a peaceful settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli crisis and, at worst, could lead to developments spinning out of control.

Russia condemns terrorism in all its forms. It is convinced that political goals cannot be achieved through acts of terrorism. This condemnation also fully applies to terrorist acts carried out in Israel. We express our deep condolences to the families of the deceased and our sincere sympathy to all the victims. The actions of terrorists undermine efforts to establish peace in the region. They create further obstacles in the road towards a political settlement. They not only wreak devastation on completely innocent people, but damage the national interests of the Palestinian people and put roadblocks in the path towards Palestinian statehood.

In order to break this vicious circle of confrontation, it is important for all the parties involved to refrain from steps that harm our chances for renewing the political process.

We call on the leadership of Israel and the Palestinian Authority to act with the utmost responsibility. It is unacceptable for extremists to dictate their will. The leaders of both sides must take all necessary steps to prevent the situation from spiralling out of control once and for all. We can only break the back of this confrontation and put an end to terror and other manifestations of violence through the joint efforts of Israelis and Palestinians, who must comply with their mutually agreed commitments. This will require the parties to return to following the road map, with the active support of the international community, first and foremost the Quartet of international mediators — Russia, the United States, the European Union and the United Nations.

The road map is unique. It may provide the only chance of finding a way out of the crisis and of reaching a settlement that fully meets the interests of both the Israeli and Palestinian peoples and establishes conditions for them to live in a secure peace. It is our firm view that diplomatic efforts must continue with a view to taking practical steps to find a way out of the tragedy of the situation in the Middle East on the basis of a renewed process towards political settlement.

Both the elimination of terror and a final settlement, including the establishment of a Palestinian State, would meet the fundamental interests of Israelis and Palestinians. This can be achieved only through peaceful means and the active cooperation of international mediators.

We note the important constructive role to be played by the Security Council. Russia, as a co-sponsor of the peace process, will continue to make an active contribution to these efforts.

Mr. De La Sablière (France) (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset to say that France associates itself fully with the statement to be made later by the representative of Italy on behalf of the European Union.

I should like to thank the Secretary-General's Special Coordinator, Mr. Roed-Larsen, for his briefing. France shares his analysis and agrees with his recommendations. I should also like to thank you, Sir, for having organized this public debate. On Friday the Arab Group asked for the Council to meet and to take immediate action. The extreme gravity of the situation on the ground requires the entire international community to make its voice known and to search for collective solutions. The matter is one of great urgency, given that we are now — in September 2003 — entering the fourth year of the intifada and that 10 years ago the Washington Declaration was signed by Mr. Arafat and Mr. Rabin.

What is the current situation? What are the remedies? The situation is one of violence on both sides; insecurity is growing and peace seems far away. We are at a critical point. Barbaric terrorist acts perpetrated by armed Palestinian groups hostile to peace continue against Israeli civilians. Israeli civilians are living in daily anxiety and fear for their lives and the lives of their children. Palestinians also live with the same fear and anxiety. Targeted killings organized by the Israeli army continue; just as children are killed, houses are demolished, farmland is destroyed and other acts of collective reprisals continue. The Israeli authorities are building a separation wall that impinges upon Palestinian lands and encircles the population. Some towns, in particular Qalqiliya, have become ghettos. Settlement activity is growing and settlements are growing larger, particularly in Jerusalem, which is a Holy City three times over and which the Council has always said had a special character whose nature should be respected.

Against that backdrop, the Israeli decision in principle to remove Yasser Arafat, who is the

legitimately elected President of the Palestinian Authority, is contrary to the basic rules of international law. It is also a grave political mistake. Announcing that decision, and its possible implementation, can only be counterproductive for Israeli security and for the prospects for peace. One does not get to choose the people one deals with in a peace process. By definition, in a conflict one makes peace with one's enemies. It is not by avoiding those Palestinian political realities that we will be able to arrive at an independent, viable and democratic Palestinian State that co-exists with the State of Israel, which has a legitimate right to live in security and within internationally recognized borders.

Stopping terrorism cannot be done solely through the logic of military and police security. Making security a precondition for launching political dialogue is tantamount to allowing the entire peace process to be highjacked by extremists, thereby letting terrorists impose their own timetable and interests, as opposed to those of the Palestinian people. Security and policy must go hand-in-hand in pursuing the peace process.

The response to the problem of the terrorism embraced by some Palestinian groups must be comprehensive. The Palestinian people must be mobilized for peace and must stand behind their Prime Minister and Government. That presupposes that Palestinian energies not be polarized by internal power struggles and that the President, Prime Minister, Government and Parliament act under basic Palestinian law and in a spirit of unity to implement the road map. The new Prime Minister and his Government must be able to take all necessary measures to reform and unite the security apparatus. They must also do their utmost to arrest and bring to justice the perpetrators of terrorist acts and to dismantle the infrastructure supporting them. Palestinian institutional reforms must then be carried out, and free, transparent and democratic elections held as soon as possible.

It is just as crucial that Israel make the necessary gestures so that the Palestinian people can see the tangible and immediate fruits of the peace process and of dialogue, as opposed to frustration, anger and revolt. The Israeli army must withdraw from all autonomous Palestinian areas and close targeted killings, which are contrary to international law and fuel the cycle of violence. Roadblocks, sieges, curfews and other restrictions against the Palestinian people must be lifted. Israel must discontinue all settlement activities and construction of the separation wall.

That comprehensive and non-sequential approach is the logic advocated by the Quartet's road map, which is not being implemented on the ground due to the lack of a genuine implementation mechanism. France has always called for determined action by the Quartet — which is made up by the United States, the United Nations, the European Union and the Russian Federation — in accordance with the role set forth for it in the road map. France has also called for the holding of an international conference to put the peace process back on track, as well as for the establishment of an effective international monitoring mechanism to ensure that the parties respect their commitments. Both of those elements are called for in the road map. We also believe that an international interposition force that ensures the interests of both parties must be contemplated, but they must both accept it.

France is a friend of Israel, the Arab world and Palestinians. The gravity of the situation on the ground requires extra effort and courage on the part of all of us. We all expect a great deal from the United States and the Quartet, who are the parties principally engaged on the ground and whom we support fully. A silent Security Council would be shirking its responsibilities. The Council must speak for what is right and lend its support to peace efforts. France welcomes the initiative of the Arab Group and is prepared to work on that basis to adopt a consensus Security Council resolution that is commensurate with the seriousness of the situation and that makes a contribution to peace.

Mr. Maquieira (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would first like to express my gratitude for the briefing given to us by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Terje Roed-Larsen, who has provided us with a detailed and sobering description of the situation in the region.

Following the official presentation by the Quartet of its new peace proposal to resolve a conflict that has confronted Palestinians and Israelis for generations — known as the road map — there arose in both the region and the international community the hope that, through the appointment of the first Palestinian Prime Minister with executive powers such as the ones held by Mr. Abbas had, it might be possible — this time — for the Palestinian National Authority to carry out the commitments it undertook, thereby making it possible to take decisive steps towards peace in the region.

The Government of Chile notes with deep concern that the road map has encountered serious setbacks — for which both parties are responsible — that have led it to the point of stagnation and resolutely placed it on the path of destruction and senseless death. We therefore condemn the demolition of homes, the continuing construction of the wall of separation on Palestinian territory that is dividing entire communities, the disproportionate use of force and targeted assassinations by the Israeli Government. The Government of the Palestinian National Authority has failed to quell domestic conflicts and has been remiss in exerting its authority and dismantling terrorist groups. The conflict has no military solution, and narrow-mindedness and the lack of humanity will not alter the situation.

The international community has also recently become aware of the decision in principle by the Israeli Government to expel President Arafat. For the Government of Chile, that is a very grave announcement that should be categorically rejected. President Arafat is a democratic official who was legitimately elected by the Palestinian people. It is therefore solely up to the Palestinians to pronounce themselves as to their future. We launch an appeal that that decision, which could definitively end the slim hopes that still remain for the implementation of the road map and which could lead to the further expansion of violence in the region and other unforeseeable consequences, not be implemented.

We must also express in the clearest terms our condemnation for the terrorists acts committed by radical groups against Israeli civilians. Stopping and disbanding such terrorist groups would contribute to re-establishing the necessary environment to build confidence between the parties. Any other effort will be doomed to failure.

At the same time, the Israeli Government must end the targeted killing of Palestinians, which has led to the exacerbation of hatred and many innocent civilian victims. It must also stop building the separation wall, lift the measures that have resulted in a deterioration of the living conditions of Palestinians and end its settlement policy.

The international community has observed with interest the formation of the new Palestinian Government and the real powers it will have to fulfil its tasks, especially with regard to security. Likewise, we appeal to the Government of Israel to make every effort to implement the steps necessary to strengthen the work of the new Prime Minister and to assist him in his work. Otherwise, it will be very difficult for a Palestinian Prime Minister to contain extremist elements or gain the enthusiasm of moderates.

In closing, responsibility for reaching a peace agreement between Israelis and Palestinians falls essentially on the authorities of both peoples. It is up to the international community to help the parties and to support them in their efforts towards a peace process.

However, if the parties directly involved do not demonstrate the genuine political will to recreate a scenario allowing the peace process to be resumed, the international community should make every effort to urge them back onto the road of dialogue. We therefore urge the Quartet to take initiatives leading towards the restoration of the road map.

Mr. Pleuger (Germany): First of all, let me thank Mr. Roed-Larsen for his very useful and comprehensive briefing on the latest developments in the Middle East. I would then like to associate myself with the statement to be given later in this debate by the Italian presidency of the European Union.

My Government is deeply concerned with regard to the latest developments in the Middle East conflict. The decision by Israel to expel in principle Mr. Arafat — the democratically elected and legitimate Chairman of the Palestinian National Authority — is helpful neither in stabilizing the already volatile situation nor in strengthening the security of Israel. On the contrary, the decision adds tension to the situation and makes a solution to the ongoing conflict more difficult. Both sides need to show restraint – we have insisted on that time and again. Also, the remarks made by the Israeli Vice Prime Minister this weekend on different options contemplated in dealing with Chairman Arafat are not helpful. We therefore welcome the clarification by Foreign Minister Shalom that these remarks do not reflect the official position of the Israeli Government. Furthermore, we feel that the Israeli Government should revoke last week's decision.

Likewise, Hamas suicide bombings and Israeli counterattacks have led to a spiral of violence and counter-violence over the last weeks that is claiming an intolerable loss of innocent civilian lives. The deterioration of the situation on the ground has also put

in jeopardy the efforts of the international community to restore peace in the region.

The peace process is currently in a critical phase, which could easily turn out to be a turning point for the worse. It is therefore absolutely vital that all parties engaged in the road map and in the peace process – Israel and the Palestinians, as well as the Quartet - do their utmost to get the road map back on track, especially as there is no alternative to the road map.

We now call on Palestinians and Israelis to commit themselves to the road map in both word and deed. In this regard, we expect from the Palestinian Authority that a new, empowered Government will be quickly formed; that the reorganization of security forces foreseen in the road map will finally be realized; and that visible efforts will be undertaken to dismantle all terrorist organizations.

We remind the Israeli Government that it is solely responsible for its actions. There can be no military, but only a political solution to this conflict. We believe that, without a strategy that includes a political perspective, Israel will not be able to achieve lasting security. In our view, the following steps should be taken by the Israeli Government: first, it should revoke its decision to expel in principle the Chairman of the Palestinian National Authority; secondly, it should withdraw the army from the autonomous areas; thirdly, an end must be put to targeted killings; and fourthly, it should freeze all settlement activities and the building of the security wall.

We again call on both parties to exercise utmost restraint in this crucial time for the Middle East peace process. We urge Prime Minister Sharon and designated Prime Minister Qurei to work together in a constructive spirit to speedily overcome the crisis and resume the political dialogue.

We welcome the meeting of the Quartet to be held later this month here in New York, as announced by Mr. Roed-Larsen. We expect bold steps conducive to jump-starting the road map process and to opening an effective way to a lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola): My delegation thanks Mr. Roed-Larsen for his comprehensive and very thorough briefing. Unfortunately, the tone of today's briefing was quite different from others in the past, reflecting a deteriorating situation as compared to that of July and August, in which he described the situation as fragile but nonetheless offering a revival of the peace process based on the Quartet's road map, which opened a window of opportunity to peace after more than 1,000 days of bloodshed.

Some important developments substantiated the conscious optimism then expressed by Mr. Roed-Larsen. First, the talks held at the end of July between President Bush and the Palestinian and Israeli Prime Ministers on the road map's implementation were seen as reflecting the United States Government's commitment to the process. Secondly, the support expressed by the Quartet members for the policy of the Palestinian Government, headed by then Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas, and the recognition of the existence of external conditions for achieving a breakthrough towards the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict were assurances of the international community's commitment to the process. Thirdly, the declaration of the Israeli Prime Minister that Israel was ready to make the necessary concessions in order to advance the peace process were fundamental reassurances that things could move forward in the right direction. Fourthly, the far-reaching reforms initiated by the Palestinian Authority, as demanded by the international community and by the Israeli authorities — especially the ceasefire that the Palestinian Prime Minister was able to put into effect as a prerequisite to start implementing the tasks of the road map — were very important elements that gave additional confidence to the process and its launching.

Finally, the meetings that were taking place regularly between Israelis and Palestinians and the discussions they were holding on outstanding issues brought renewed hope for the creation of a climate conducive to the building of confidence between the parties for the improvement of relations between Israelis and Palestinians and to a meaningful peace process.

Angola regrets the fact that we are back in the cycle of violence. What went wrong? Why, once again, did things fail and the cycle of violence and revenge take hold? How can the serious doubts about the possibility of reviving the peace process be overcome? How can bloodshed be ended so as to realize the vision of the two peoples living in peace and security side by side? Those are a few questions that the Palestinians, the Israelis and the international community must answer in order to devise new ways to put things back

on the right track and to renew efforts conducive to solutions to the immense crisis that the region is again facing.

At the present juncture, the Palestinians and the Israelis are faced with dramatic choices and no choice at all with respect to the road of peace. It seems to us that, from the Israeli side, the choices are made and, if implemented, could lead to even greater damage to the whole peace process and to the road map. The avowed intention of the Israeli authorities to kill or ban the Palestinian President is inserted in the same logic as the construction of the separation wall — to cause immediate harm to Israeli-Palestinian relations.

In the view of the Angolan delegation, the will of Palestinians and Israelis to strive for peace and conviviality between the two peoples will need, more than ever, the assistance of the international community in order to overcome the very difficult times ahead. Such assistance must also focus on helping the Palestinian Government to curb destructive actions by armed groups. The international community must mobilize all its efforts to ensure that the Israeli plans concerning President Yasir Arafat do not go ahead. The Security Council must take a clear stand on this issue. The United States and other members of the Quartet must make Israel understand that its intentions are an extremely dangerous step of incalculable consequences.

Finally, it is our view that the Quartet should deploy bold efforts in order to try to revive the peace process. We look forward to the meeting to be held in New York at the end of this month, as indicated by Mr. Larsen.

We agree also with Mr. Larsen when he says that the parties have no other alternative than to recommit — and I would say convincingly — to the road map. The international community cannot stand idle before the great tragedy that is unfolding dangerously in the Middle East.

Mr. Arias (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I align myself with the statement that will be made by the representative of Italy.

The report of Mr. Larsen on the developments in Israel and the Palestinian territories has been particularly clear and accurate. It bears out the critical situation of which we are all aware.

I will not dwell on the tragic accumulation of acts of terrorism and violence, with their endless cortege of innocent victims, which, of course, we condemn vigorously. No one can convince us, for example, that the placement of a bomb on a school bus can have the slightest justification, political or otherwise. It is an outrageous and condemnable act.

In these delicate times, I wish to address one point that has already been mentioned. The decision of the Government of Israel on the possible deportation of the President of the Palestine National Authority, Mr. Arafat, contributes absolutely nothing to the cause of peace. To the contrary, it opens the door wide to increased tensions in a fragile and highly dangerous scenario. Apart from the non-existence of a legal basis, the decision constitutes a mistake of seemingly incalculable, but in fact foreseeable and terrible, consequences. Its revocation would be a step in the right political direction.

We have been stressing the fragility of the mechanism contained in the road map and the need for it to be applied with an interpretation and in a context that will make it possible for it to succeed. That is not happening. The road map is being used to get bogged down in the search for tiny steps forward that are constantly being refuted by the facts.

I believe that, at this juncture, the Council and the Secretary-General should insist on two central points, without which the road map is doomed to failure.

The first point is to stress the need for and the reality of a presence and an international commitment to the resolution of the conflict. The international community has always been present in this conflict, *inter alia*, by financing through a variety of channels the very survival of its actors. The road map has been sensitive to that need and contemplates the holding of an international conference on peace in the Middle East. But we cannot wait for the conditions to come about for such a conference. Our Organization must demand that the key international actors represented by the Quartet act in a much more committed fashion and confront both parties with their responsibilities. Among other things — and not least important — external observation, in depth and on the ground, continues to be absolutely necessary.

Secondly, we wish to reiterate that the driving engine of the road map can only be a political perspective that is deserving of the support of both

societies in the conflict. That political perspective is defined ambiguously in the road map. This does not lead us anywhere. There needs to be a design, as detailed as possible, of the point that we wish to reach, a design that can be proposed to both societies with expectations of gaining majority support and a design that responds truly to the two most pressing requirements: Israel's security and the viability of the future Palestinian State.

In the pursuit of those two goals, the role of the United States and other members of the Quartet, particularly the European Union, will be essential.

I would venture to say, and I conclude on this note, that the horizon of peace necessarily implies an in-depth commitment by the United States and the European Union. The Secretary-General of our Organization should revitalize the very essence of the operations of the Quartet with those prospects in mind.

Mr. Sow (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to express my delegation's gratitude to Mr. Roed-Larsen for his edifying and very moving briefing on the tragedy and the very disturbing developments currently taking place in the Middle East, and most particularly in occupied Palestine.

During our recent consultations, in light of the situation prevailing on the ground, my delegation has already expressed its deep concern about the future of the political process in the region, given the challenges to the parties and the international community by the resumption of the cycle of violence, suicide bombings and reprisals in both Palestine and Israel.

In this context, the decision in principle on 11 September by the Israeli Cabinet to expel the President of the Palestinian Authority from Ramallah aggravates the crisis and jeopardizes the prospects for peace that had been opened by the road map. It is a major political error with unpredictable consequences, which cannot be tolerated.

My country, Guinea, concerned about respect for international law, would like to recall that President Yasir Arafat, democratically elected by his people and an historic figure in the struggle for Palestinian liberation, is and remains a key actor in the peace process. Therefore, far from being an obstacle, he is the very symbol of the identity and the march of the Palestinians on the route of self-determination of freedom and progress.

The Israeli decision has no legal justification and is in fact counterproductive. It only strengthens the disappointment of the Palestinians and leads to a programmed death of the Quartet's road map. In our opinion, that is a result of the policy of weakening and destroying Palestinian institutions that the current Israeli Government regrettably persists in carrying out. Such an attitude can never serve the interests of Israel. Rather, it will have the opposite effect.

After a short period of calm during which a ray of hope glimmered on the horizon, the level of violence and political frustration has abruptly risen again, accompanied by misfortune and desperation. Once again, the logic of mutual defiance, marked by the increase in suicide bombings and unjustifiable extra-judicial killings, has taken over.

My delegation regrets that the security and institutional reforms implemented by the Palestinian Authority have not been accompanied by Israeli respect for those commitments. The continuation of the occupation of the Palestinian territories and the extra-judicial killings are reprehensible acts in flagrant violation of international law. They must be banned.

Moreover, the building of the wall of separation, which is the prelude to a veritable bantustan policy, violates the fundamental principles of international law. The wall can in no way meet Israel's security needs. On the contrary, it further fans the flames of the frustrations of the Palestinian population, which finds itself totally isolated and despoiled and which has no choice but to defy this colonialist undertaking.

As well, the suicide attacks that indiscriminately strike Israeli citizens, including women and children, are to be condemned and must not be encouraged.

Those acts, committed by both sides, serve to heighten tensions and to deepen further the chasm separating Palestinians and Israelis, whose futures nevertheless remain inextricably linked. There is no doubt that in such conditions, prospects look bleak and the future of peace in the Middle East is put at risk.

Before this terrible situation, fraught with threats and harmful to peace and security, the Security Council cannot stand by idly or fail to assume its responsibilities. The Council must contribute to the full and complete implementation of the Quartet's road map.

My delegation is convinced that the peace plan, which is full of ambitions and is the fruit of long and courageous negotiations, represents the only real chance for putting an end to a conflict that has been devastating the Middle East region for a long time and which requires action from the international community as a whole.

It is a difficult task for this time and will be achieved through a policy of tolerance and compromise. To achieve that, the two parties involved must employ the same standards, admit their responsibilities and negotiate transparently.

In this critical context, the international community must send a strong signal to both parties, especially to the Israeli authorities to dissuade them from carrying out their decision in principle to expel the President of the Palestinian Authority or to continue to envisage the chaos-creating alternative of physically destroying him. That is why my delegation is in favour of adopting in the near future the resolution presented by the Arab Group during their consultations with the Security Council last Friday.

Guinea reaffirms its conviction that the States of the region, including the State of Israel and a State for Palestine, have the right to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders. That is why my delegation urges the parties to respect the commitments they undertook within the framework of the Quartet's road map and, with the assistance of the international community under the impetus of the United States and the European Union, to ensure the effective and rapid resumption of the peace process in order to reach a definitive peaceful political settlement.

The challenge is immense. But, if we are united and determined to implement the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly, we will be able to reverse the current trend and recover the road to peace.

Mr. Negroponte (United States): I would like to join others in thanking Mr. Roed-Larsen for his very comprehensive briefing.

Over the weekend the Secretary-General and the permanent members of the Security Council reaffirmed their commitment to the Quartet's road map and urged both sides to go forward with its implementation. While all parties have responsibilities in bringing peace to the Middle East, ending terrorism must be the highest priority. Those responsible for targeting civilians and obstructing the Quartet's efforts and Palestinian prospects for an independent State are known groups: Hamas, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad and the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade. The leaders and spokesmen of these groups have openly claimed credit for scores of terrorist bombings, most recently Hamas's bombings in Jerusalem on 19 August and 9 September and in Tel Aviv on 9 September. I think we all recognize the tragic dynamic in play in the Middle East. Each time a glimmer of hope — however dim — appears, a terrorist act seeks to extinguish it.

The Council must take a clear stand against the actions of these terrorist groups and call for decisive action against them. In that regard, we commend the European Union for adopting a clear stance on Hamas earlier this month.

Any Security Council resolution on the Middle East that we would support must contain a robust condemnation of acts of terrorism, an explicit condemnation of Hamas, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad and the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade as organizations responsible for acts of terrorism. Such a resolution must also call for the dismantling of the infrastructure that supports those terror operations, wherever located, consistent with resolution 1373 (2001). We will not support any resolution that evades the explicit threat to the Middle East peace process posed by Hamas and other such terrorist groups.

The next Palestinian Prime Minister must have real political authority to act against terrorist organizations, as well as the tools to do so, including control over all the security organizations within the Palestinian Authority. The new Prime Minister and his Cabinet must demand that all acts of terrorism cease and insist that terrorist organizations and armed groups not under the control of the Palestinian Authority be outlawed and dismantled.

For its part, we believe that Israel must move forward and fulfil its obligations and commitments under the road map. That will provide a supportive environment for the new Palestinian leadership to act decisively against terrorist organizations such as Hamas, Islamic Jihad and the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, which are intent on destroying the road map and the prospects for a two-State solution.

In closing, I would like to underscore that the Government of Israel is already aware of the views of

Council members on the issue of Mr. Arafat. In addition, Secretary of State Colin Powell stated recently that the United States does not support either the elimination of Mr. Arafat or his forced exile. We have conveyed our view to the Government of Israel and have cautioned against this.

Quartet envoys met on 13 September to prepare for a meeting of principals in New York later this month. In order to more quickly realize a two-State solution in the Middle East, we urge members of the Council, Member States and both parties to condemn terrorism as a means of achieving political objectives and to rally to the support of the Quartet road map. That — not another Security Council resolution — would represent the most constructive way forward at this critical juncture.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of the United Kingdom.

Like others, I should like to thank Mr. Roed-Larsen for his briefing. Before I begin, I should like to underline that the United Kingdom fully associates itself with the statement to be made later by the representative of Italy on behalf of the European Union.

The United Kingdom unreservedly condemns the recent escalation of violence and terrorism in Israel and in the occupied territories. We support Israeli actions within international law to act to prevent further terrorist attacks and to protect the lives of its citizens, and we understand the domestic pressure to do so. But the British Foreign Secretary has clearly voiced our fundamental disagreement with the Israeli security cabinet's decision in principle to expel President Arafat from the occupied territories. It would be wrong in principle to force the elected leader of the Palestinians to leave the Palestinian Authority area. But further, the impact of such an action would be overwhelmingly negative for the peace process — radicalizing Palestinian society and leading to an upsurge in tension and violence rather than the diminution that we all desire — and it would leave Israel with no peace process and no partner for peace.

The small minority who are not interested in securing a peaceful settlement for Israelis and Palestinians must not be allowed to dictate and block the political process. That process should not be held hostage to terrorists. Accordingly, the United Kingdom calls on the parties to press forward with the implementation of their commitments under the road map. This is a vital juncture for Israel and for the Palestinian Authority. Both now face a stark choice: to return to the intense suffering of the past three years, or to resume implementation of their obligations under the road map. We strongly urge them not to allow the rejectionists to succeed in destroying the political process.

The Palestinian Authority has an opportunity — and urgently needs — to form an effective and empowered Government under its new Prime Minister. It needs to reorganize its security forces under his control, to take determined and visible action against the terrorist groups and to take further necessary steps to reform its institutions. It is long overdue that responsibility should be exercised. We will continue to offer British support to a Palestinian Government committed to making progress on these issues. For its part, Israel should immediately end targeted killings, freeze all settlement activity and begin withdrawal of the Israeli Defence Forces to the positions held prior to September 2000.

In these difficult times, it is vital that the international community unite in support of the cause of peace. The United Kingdom remains firm in its commitment to a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement based on the two-State solution put forward in the Quartet road map. The action of the Quartet to drive this process forward is critical and is now more urgent than ever, so we welcome the decision of the principals to meet in New York later this month. It is up to the Quartet, together, to supervise the implementation of its road map, following closely the actions of the parties and acting when either party falls behind on its commitments. The United Kingdom reaffirms its willingness to contribute to Quartet activities in whatever way we can.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

There are 26 speakers remaining on my list. I propose that we continue this meeting after a suitable break, if that is acceptable to colleagues. Secondly, the Council has other business before it, including a request for consultations on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. I am grateful to colleagues for the restraint that they showed in the duration of their speeches this morning, but this afternoon we do need to accommodate other business

and 26 speakers. So, with the concurrence of members of the Council, I suggest that there be a time limit of three minutes per speaker for this afternoon's session.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

We shall thus continue this afternoon at 3 o'clock, and each speaker will be limited strictly to three minutes. Given that we are now well under way and that this meeting has its own momentum, I suggest that we begin promptly at 3 o'clock.

The meeting was suspended at 1.40 p.m.